



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Investigates Cluster of Novel H1N1 Influenza Cases *North Dakotans Reminded To Take Steps To Prevent Spread of Disease*

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is investigating a cluster of novel H1N1 (swine flu) cases, according to Tracy Miller, epidemiologist with the Department of Health.

The cases have been reported in Walsh and Traill counties. All of the individuals recently traveled to a national Lutheran youth gathering in Louisiana. About 26 became ill with influenza-like illnesses shortly after returning to North Dakota. Samples were collected from five individuals, all five of which tested positive for novel H1N1 influenza at the Department of Health's Division of Laboratory Services. All of the individuals are recovering or have recovered; none was hospitalized.

“This cluster of H1N1 cases reinforces the importance of taking steps to prevent the spread of influenza, both novel H1N1 and seasonal influenza,” Miller said. “That becomes even more important as school begins this fall. When vaccines become available for seasonal and H1N1 influenza, we encourage everyone to get vaccinated. And, we all must do our part to stop its spread.”

The following steps can help stop the spread of influenza:

- If you are sick, stay home from work or school to avoid spreading the infection to others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough and sneeze into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs often are spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- Contact your doctor if you are experiencing cough, fever and fatigue, possibly along with diarrhea and vomiting.

“Following these simple guidelines can help reduce the spread of disease,” Miller said. “Until we have vaccines available, these are the best tools we have to protect ourselves and our families from influenza.”

Information about H1N1, including case information for North Dakota, can be found at www.ndflu.com. For more information, the media can contact Tracy Miller at 701.328.2378.

Note to the Media: The North Dakota Department of Health has developed a policy for release of information regarding North Dakota H1N1 cases. You can view this policy at www.ndhan.gov/media/.

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